

and the history of the world: “We the people.”

By trusting the people, our Founders wagered that a great and noble nation could be built on the liberty that resides in the hearts of all men and women. By trusting the people, succeeding generations transformed our fragile young democracy into the most powerful nation on Earth and a beacon of hope for millions. And so long as we continue to trust the people, our Nation will prosper, our liberty will be secure, and the state of our Union will remain strong.

So tonight, with confidence in freedom’s power and trust in the people, let us set forth to do their business. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:09 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; and former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President’s Commission on Care for America’s Returning Wounded Warriors. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Proclamation 8218—National African American History Month, 2008

January 28, 2008

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During National African American History Month, we honor the achievements and celebrate the rich heritage of African Americans.

Throughout our Nation’s history, African Americans from all walks of life have offered their talents to the betterment of American society. Scholars such as Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. DuBois were early leaders who placed great importance on educating all people about the need for justice and racial equality. Athletes such as Jackie Robinson and Althea Gibson persevered while breaking the color barrier and competing at the

highest levels of sports. Musicians like Nat King Cole and Billie Holiday lifted the American spirit with their creativity and musical gifts. Through their extraordinary accomplishments, these leaders helped bring our Nation closer to fulfilling its founding ideals.

This year’s theme, “Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism,” honors an educator who taught his fellow citizens about the traditions and contributions of African Americans. His dedication to educating Americans about cultural diversity initiated this celebration of African-American history. Our Nation is now stronger and more hopeful because generations of leaders like him have worked to help America live up to its promise of equality and the great truth that all of God’s children are created equal.

Throughout African American History Month, we celebrate the many contributions African Americans have made to our Nation, and we are reminded of their courage in their struggle to change the hearts and minds of our citizens. While much progress has been made, we must continue to work together to achieve the promise and vision of our great Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim February 2008 as National African American History Month. I call upon public officials, educators, and all the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 30, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 29, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on January 31.

Remarks During a Visit to the Jericho Program in Baltimore, Maryland

January 29, 2008

Thank you all for coming. I'm proud to be standing with you men. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your hospitality.

Last night in my State of the Union, I highlighted the important work being done by faith-based organizations. This morning I was pleased to visit one of these inspiring groups, the Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, right here in Baltimore. I cannot thank you enough for the chance to take a tour. And Bonnie, you and your staff have been most hospitable.

I've come to look firsthand at the Jericho Program, which is helping former prisoners make a successful transition back to society. There's no more important goal than to help good souls become—come back to our society as productive citizens. I'm honored to have been with those who have worked hard to deal with their circumstances in such a way that they become productive citizens. I'm standing next to two such men, and I met probably seven others downstairs.

I do want to thank Bonnie Ariano for joining me and the Secretary. I'm going to talk about the Secretary's role here in a minute, in this important program. I thank very much Greg Carpenter, a former prisoner who is now a mentor, a leader in this program. And he's a—I appreciate his heart.

I welcome Jay Hein, Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the White House. I do want to thank State Senator David Brinkley for joining us. Senator, I'm proud you're here. I appreciate the Jericho staff. I want to thank the Episcopal Community Services of Maryland board of directors. I appreciate you all coming. I thank you very much for supporting this program.

When I came into office, the Nation's traditions of religious freedom and equal opportunity were facing unnecessary obstacles. Throughout America, religious and community groups were providing effective assistance to people in need, but there was a great reluctance on the part of the Federal Government to help them. There was the notion

that somehow that there needed to be a clear separation of church and state, and therefore, we shouldn't be using taxpayers' money to help programs that were helping to meet important national goals.

Unfortunately, in some instances where there was an interface with Government, people were told that in order to interface, you have to take the cross off the wall or take down the Star of David. In other words, you had to abandon the very principle by which you existed in the first place. And it made no sense. If a program was effective because they were willing to recognize a higher power, if a program was effective because people responded because they felt a call from a higher power, then to deny the higher power really reduced the effectiveness of the program.

And so 7 years ago, my administration created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to deal with this problem. We wanted to focus our Government and taxpayers' money on solutions, on effective programs, and we recognized that many of the effective programs existed in the faith community. Washington, DC, often-times is a process-oriented town. We need to work hard to make it a results-oriented town. And if one of the compelling national interests is to help good people who have been in prison come back and readjust and learn skills and the attitudes necessary to be a productive citizen, if that's an important national concern, then we ought to turn to programs that are meeting those results. That's what we ought to do.

And that's what's happening right here. That's why I'm here. This is a program that is working, and it is supported by the Federal Government, and it should be.

Since 2001, the Government has leveled the playing field. That's one of our objectives early on in my administration, was to level the playing field, to make it easier for faith-based and community groups to compete for billions of dollars in Federal grants, grants that would help them accomplish their objectives.

With this newfound support, America's faith-based groups are getting results. If you ask people here, is a program working? The answer is, absolutely. It's one thing to ask